



State of Arizona

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Governor Jan Brewer Signs Legislation to Safeguard Arizona Children

Provides for New CPS Investigators, Improves Agency Transparency and Practices

PHOENIX – Governor Jan Brewer today signed into law legislation aimed at protecting and upholding the safety and best interests of Arizona children. The bills – HB 2721, SB 1127 and HB 2794 – will revamp the current outdated standards and processes pertaining to child protective services in the State, strengthen the statutory protections and safeguards for Arizona children and, ultimately, work to improve the safety of children under State care or supervision..

“I’m an elected official but – first and foremost – I’m a mother. I believe there can be no higher priority than the safety and well being of our children,” said Governor Brewer. “I am proud to have signed into law these three significant pieces of legislation, which will preserve and promote the best interests of our children.”

HB 2721 provides for a new Office of Child Welfare Investigations, fulfilling a cornerstone recommendation put forth by the Governor’s Child Safety Task Force. Funded by a \$2.3 million appropriation in the Fiscal 2013 State budget, the Office will employ and train 28 child welfare investigators to handle Arizona’s highest-priority cases of suspected child abuse and neglect.

SB 1127 updates current Arizona statute to modify the factors a court must consider when determining what is in the best interest of a child. The ultimate goal is to limit one-sided custody decisions and to encourage as much shared parent-child time as possible for the positive development of the child.

Finally, HB 2794 stems from recommendations brought forth by Governor Brewer’s Child Safety Task Force. Among its provisions, this legislation will: improve communication between CPS and law enforcement; mandate annual reports detailing the effectiveness of these joint investigations; and streamline CPS processes with the intent to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the department.

“I commend the Legislature and the sponsors of these bills for working diligently and cooperatively to safeguard Arizona children,” said Governor Brewer. “Child safety is a complex issue and government is only part of the equation. But I am committed to doing whatever possible to ensure the safety of children under state care or supervision.”

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